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AUTHOR Barnhurst, Kevin G.
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ABSTRACT

Newspaper layout and design studies ignore politics, and most studies of newspaper politics ignore visual design. News layout is generally thought to be a set of neutral, efficient practices. This study suggests that the political position of Peruvian newspapers parallels their visual presentation of terrorism. The liberal "La Republica" covered events in the insurgency extensively and explicitly, as predicted. Conservative newspapers attempted to control terrorism by reducing the extent and limiting the prominence of coverage. One newspaper, the prestigious "El Comercio," used layout as a primary tool to downplay news of the Sendero Luminoso (the Shining Path insurgency group). Two tables present content analyses of the newspapers. (Contains 37 references.) (Author/SLD)

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ED 370 599

Layout as Political Expression: Visual Literacy & the Peruvian Press

by Kevin Barnhurst

Syracuse University
Public Communications
215 University Place
Syracuse, NY 13244-2100

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Layout as Political Expression: Visual Literacy and the Peruvian Press

Kevin G. Barnhurst

Newspaper layout and design studies ignore politics, and most studies of newspaper politics ignore visual design. News layout is generally thought to be a set of neutral, efficient practices. This study suggests that the political position of Peruvian newspapers parallels their visual presentation of terrorism. The liberal La República *covered events in the insurgency extensively and explicitly, as predicted. Conservative newspapers attempted to control terrorism by reducing the extent and limiting the prominence of coverage. One newspaper, the prestigious* El Comercio, *used layout as a primary tool to downplay news of Sendero Luminoso.*

Most studies of newspaper design treat layout as a set of professional practices that are essentially neutral (1, 2). Important news becomes a *big* story, a *headliner* or *banner* story, a *top* story, or a *front-page* story. These terms constitute the journalistic vocabulary of form, the equivalent of *sequence*, *direction*, and *scale* in the larger vocabulary of formal attributes from design. Layout correlates these attributes with news values, resulting in a visual record of what professionals, circumscribed by custom and procedure, judge to be news (3, 4).

This set of practices would go largely unexamined if not for two factors. The first is the tendency of journalists to dispute news judgments. Editors compare their layouts to the competition. When a particular story or subject matter gets consistently over- or underplayed, that coverage is considered sensational or biased (5). These charges assume that journalism should accurately reflect an objective reality. An alternative explanation, drawn from the theory of cultivation analysis, suggests that the media reinforce the dominant view of social reality (6). In this scheme, a charge of bias or sensationalism relies on its deviation from the dominant view, which is believed to be pervasive and persistent across society. The second factor is the tendency of layout practices to change over time. Editors promote new styles of layout by arguing for progress and efficiency. Academic research even reflects those arguments (7, 8, 9). The employment of newer typographic forms is taken as only natural and functional, and the change from traditional to modern tastes is taken as a sign of progress (10).

Just as studies of newspaper layout and design ignore politics, research on political violence and newspapers, for the most part, ignores visual design (11). Although newspapers

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are known to be political, economic, social, and cultural, these aspects are usually not thought to reside in layout practices. Newspapers are more commonly defined by their verbal content (12). The literature germane to this study typically ties the verbal content directly to politics without considering the visual play of the stories (13). For example, Epstein (14) found that the political stance of a newspaper was related to its verbal coverage of terrorism. The explicit mention of state terrorism was more frequent in the liberal *New York Times* than in more-conservative newspapers. But the study did not measure the visual play of the stories.

However, a few studies have attempted to examine the prominence given through visual presentation in newspapers (15). One study (16) compared the space allocated to terrorism coverage in two elite newspapers and defined the prominence of coverage by its position on the front page or in the upper half of the page. Another study (17) measured the length of the articles and their prominent location (on the first five pages of the first section, front of the second section, and first three pages of the magazine section), concluding that terrorist acts were prominently placed. These studies followed the pioneering work of Budd (18), who measured headline size and column width, story space and length, position on the section front or top half of the page, and inclusion of a picture to describe how the news was presented. Prominent news play, under Budd's definition, differed markedly from other news in the paper. Subsequent studies used Budd's method (more or less) to explore visual prominence, but this interest was secondary to verbal content in the study of political expression.

None of these studies connected the measures of visual emphasis to the political ideology of the newspaper, as Epstein (14) did. It seems that the more attention scholars pay to aspects of visual design the less they pay to the political context. This tendency reveals the presence of a common assumption: that layout is a neutral conduit of content. The error of this assumption may seem obvious, but its tacit and widespread acceptance in the literature requires rebuttal. The nuance of the visual form of newspapers requires exploration in the context of political expression.

A Study of Political Violence in Peru

This study begins with two questions. The first is whether the newspapers' political leanings relate to their visual design. Epstein's (14) findings suggest that liberal newspapers cover political violence more extensively and explicitly than do conservative newspapers. This question requires comparing a newspaper's political leanings with its visual presentation of content. The second question concerns whether differences in visual coverage relate to official layout policies. If the form or layout reflects the papers' political positions, then it becomes important to discover whether the differences result from explicit policy or unintentional pattern.

The setting for this study was the 1989 Peruvian Independence Day celebration, which was interrupted by the activities of Sendero Luminoso, a Maoist-style insurgency called the Shining Path. The specific aspects under study were, first, the political leanings of the national press; second, the visual record of their coverage of Sendero Luminoso, and third, the layout policies of newspaper executives.

Scholars have examined elsewhere the politics and history of the violence that wracked Peru in the 1980s (19). In 1989, the state of affairs in Lima was at extremes. The electrical grid was subject to frequent and lengthy blackouts. Potable water was cut off capriciously or was totally unavailable in some districts of the city. Police routinely stopped people in the streets and demanded proof of identity. Those

without papers, along with anyone possessing "subversive" documents, could be arrested, only to vanish as *desaparecidos*. Few candidates had stepped forward to run for public office in the upcoming municipal elections, held every three years. These and other curtailments of civil liberties and public services demonstrated palpably the presence of Sendero Luminoso, which controlled several of the poorest provinces and besieged the capital. Yet Sendero Luminoso was largely *invisible* on the news stands.

Confronted daily by events that they considered terroristic (20), the newspapers in Peru made decisions that aligned them with the sides of a scholarly debate. The literature about terrorism and the press divides roughly into two camps (13). Some authorities argue that news coverage spreads terror and needs to be controlled. Others insist that the media are victimized by terrorists, that controlling coverage only penalizes the victims by damaging media credibility, and that control measures are ultimately ineffective. These camps can be characterized as conservative and liberal, although some conservatives forward a libertarian argument and some liberals urge controls (21). The Peruvian newspapers have taken sides in this debate, either attempting to control terrorism by voluntarily policing their own coverage of Sendero Luminoso, or attempting to report openly and extensively the events in the insurgency from a "patriotic" perspective. In this study, the term *conservative* refers to the former policy and the term *liberal* to the latter. All of the newspapers oppose Sendero Luminoso, but they use different oppositional strategies.

A central issue arising from events in Peru is whether the newspapers, knowingly or not, use *layout* as a tool for expressing their political stance on the question of the Sendero Luminoso insurgency. This study examines that issue from several perspectives.

METHODOLOGY

Five newspapers were selected to represent the national press. Peru is dominated by its capital city, whose residents have the saying, "Lima *is* Peru." Roughly a third of Peruvians live in the capital. Four newspapers dominate newspaper circulation in Lima: *El Comercio* (22 percent), *Expreso* (22 percent), *La República* (19 percent), and *Ojo* (17 percent) (22). These four accounted for 80 percent of the average sales in the capital, and they also dominated the national market. Three of them circulate in the provinces, and *Ojo* is the leading paper in a newspaper chain. None of the provincial newspapers has significant national circulation. Partisan newspapers run by the government and the ruling party accounted for another 12 percent of sales in Lima. The four major newspapers, along with one of the smaller partisan papers (*Hoy*) were selected for this study. These five are not meant to represent the entire industry (many small, radical newspapers, for example, are excluded), but they adequately portray the large and well-established national newspapers.

To provide a sense of the position of each newspaper along the political spectrum, knowledgeable informants were interviewed about the origins, political connections, and financial support of the study newspapers. The informants included two Peruvian journalism professors, two U.S. wire service correspondents covering the country, and the publishers of the four major independent newspapers. Four newspaper publishers also contributed impressions about their own papers as well as their competitors. The informants judged the politics of each newspaper ranging from left-leaning liberal to right-leaning conservative.

In order to compare the coverage of the same events in all five newspapers, a single day was selected for study (23). The particular day

was chosen to cast Sendero Luminoso into sharp relief by capturing a major moment in the insurgency. Senderista attacks have generally occurred on or near July 28, the anniversary of San Martín's declaration of independence from Spain in 1821. The celebration of *Fiestas Patrias* lasts two days and coincides with the mid-year school recess. Senderistas have been known to seek greater attention by disrupting holidays, rather than work days (and the press likely gives them more attention on those days as well). In 1989 the holiday fell on a Friday, and Sendero Luminoso was expected to mount its attacks on or before that day. To allow time for transmission of news from the provinces, July 30 was selected for study. A Sunday was preferred because the newspapers have more space and greater freedom to include more stories, photographs, graphics, and articles of greater length and depth.

In order to identify the individual events under study, the content of the five newspapers was read and summarized, and each item was measured and classified as advertising or news-editorial material. The news-editorial content was further divided into three categories: news, opinion, and other articles including sports, features, entertainment, and pieces with no particular time value. The author also coded each article for whether it mentioned Sendero Luminoso explicitly, was related to the insurgency without mentioning Sendero Luminoso, or was clearly unrelated. Following the approach of Epstein (14), a list of terms used to refer to government and insurgent combatants was compiled for each newspaper.

The publisher of the newspapers were then interviewed individually, using a single set of questions (24) about their political stance on the insurgency and about their layout policies. These interviews were conducted in Spanish by the author with both the author and a native speaker taking notes. The results of these interviews are reported as a narrative about the interaction of government policies, professional journalism standards, and newspaper practices, as the publishers viewed them, in relation to coverage of Sendero Luminoso.

As a check on the claims of the publishers, the author then measured the layout of the newspapers on a full range of formal attributes, based on the analysis of form described in Barnhurst (25). Besides the space it occupied, each article was coded for whether it appeared on a front or inside page. It was also ranked for its position (from top to bottom) within the page and its headline size (from largest to smallest). The headline was further coded for the number of decks (multiple headlines appearing above the same story), the number of columns it filled (a measure of its width), and the sorts of emphasis found in its typography (boldface, italic, and/or condensed). The absence or number of pictures was noted, and the shapes (from simple rectangles to many-sided polygons) and orientations (horizontal, square, or vertical) of the text blocks and the article layouts were recorded.

These measurements clarified the standard or general layout pattern in each newspaper, sometimes called its *dress,* and also allowed scrutiny of how the layout of particular content — in this case terrorism — compares with the standard treatment of stories. Under the definition suggested by Budd (18) and others, particular coverage differing markedly from the standard would bias (when underplaying) or sensationalize (when overplaying) the news or, in the theory of cultivation analysis, might also signal the dominant view.

In sum, this study reports on the coverage of one day's Senderista attacks from several perspectives: the politics of the newspapers, their news that day, the culture of the newspaper publishers, and the visual results of their politics and policies.

The Newspapers' Political Positions

The politics of the newspapers were common knowledge, shared by informed nationals as well as foreigners (see Table 1). The political positions of the newspapers seem to be related to the nature of their reading public, their financial backing, and their historical development.

El Comercio, a 150-year-old institution controlled by several generations from the Miro Quesada family with the broad support of the industrial sector, occupies the position furthest to the right. Its readers tend to be older, in the upper classes, and male (26). *Ojo*, the popular tabloid founded in 1968 with close ties to the fishing industry, gets an almost identical rating. Its readership tends toward slightly older women, as well as younger men, both from the lower and lower-middle classes. *Expreso*, the serious tabloid connected to the populist Belaunde government but with weaker ties to commerce, is also right-leaning, but more moderate than the previous two. Its readers are more likely to be slightly younger men drawn from the lower-middle class. *La República* alone occupies a liberal position on the political spectrum. It began publishing in 1981 with strong liberal support and seed money from the energy sector. Its readership leans to younger men of the middle and upper classes.

Table 1. The Politics of Large Independent Peruvian Newspapers[a]

	La República	*Expreso*	*Ojo*[b]	*El Comercio*
PUBLISHERS				
La República	1.5	3.5	—	4.5
Expreso	2	3	4	5
Ojo	1	3	5	5
El Comercio	2	4	—	3
U.S. CORRESPONDENTS				
A	2	4	4	4
B	2	4	4	5
JOURNALISM PROFESSORS				
A	2	4	5	5
B	2	5	5	5
Mean	1.8	3.8	4.5	4.6
Standard Deviation	0.35	0.61	0.5	0.68

[a]Based on interviews conducted in Lima, August 11–18, 1989. The publisher of *Hoy* and the professors each rated *Hoy* 3.

[b]The publishers of *El Comercio* and *La República* refused to rate *Ojo*. One wire correspondent said, "*Ojo* has no politics."

The publishers of *Expreso* and *El Comercio*, both of whom have strong ties with the U.S. press, placed themselves adamantly in the center, which may have skewed the sample, especially in the case of *El Comercio*. *Hoy* was not included in the ratings because it is a partisan organ founded as a tabloid in 1984 to support the centrist Aprista candidate. As a check on its stated politics, its publisher and the professors of journalism were asked to rate it separately. They uniformly placed it in the center, consonant with its party affiliation.

Content Covering Sendero Luminoso

During the week of *Fiestas Patrias*, a Senderista strike against electrical towers could be known without reading a newspaper. On Friday, Saturday, and Sunday (and for almost a week thereafter) large sections of the capital were without electricity. By Sunday the blackout was old news, carried directly to homes and

businesses over the electrical wires. *Ojo* and *El Comercio* reported on traffic and hospital electrical problems, but only *Expreso* tied the blackout to Sendero Luminoso and reported that terrorists had blown up 22 electrical towers.

Three stories related to terrorism dominated the Sunday papers. A great deal of coverage predictably went to the holiday parade, a showcase of military discipline and equipment which has been the object of repeated Senderista bombing attempts. The government also chose to disclose its claims that three anti-subversive actions had killed 110 Senderistas in the previous week. Finally, Sunday coverage included responses to the president's holiday address, in which he suggested that terrorists be prosecuted by the courts martial, not the civil judiciary.

A reading of the selected day's report on terrorism in Peru revealed individual patterns in reporting news content. The conservative tabloid *Ojo* and the partisan *Hoy* ignored terrorism beyond the two major stories. *El Comercio*, the most conservative newspaper with the most space, covered many stories about terrorism, but tended to bury them inside. The moderately conservative tabloid *Expreso* covered a broad range with shorter stories. *La República*, the liberal paper, covered terrorism more directly, with greater depth, opting to explain.

The newspapers' treatment of the three stories related to terrorism is an interesting gauge of their self-regulation. *El Comercio* and *Hoy* made no reference to terrorist threats in coverage of the parade. *Ojo* and *Expreso* dealt with parade security as directly related to the insurgency. *La República* left the parade story off page one, devoting space inside, in the local news pages, and covering the bombs and the arrests (of people distributing subversive literature during the parade) as explicit responses to terrorism, with pictures, on the center spread. *El Comercio* covered these security actions in a separate story on the police page.

Both *Ojo* and *El Comercio* gave relatively minor play to the anti-subversive actions. *Expreso* coverage was more prominent, and *La República* used a large headline and ran two pages with pictures of the funerals of slain police. While the other newspapers reported the actions uncritically, *La República* questioned the source:

> Mantilla [the minister of the interior] did not respond with greater detail, despite the demands of reporters, limiting his information to what the Joint Command had made known minutes before in a press release from the office of Public Relations (27).

The story about military courts was covered in several short items in *El Comercio* and *Expreso*. *Ojo* and *Hoy* ignored the story, but *La República* carried a group of items, including a survey of reader reaction to the speech (with a question about terrorism).

In other insurgency coverage, *El Comercio* ran the greatest range of items, including two exclusive stories. But these generally appeared with little detail on the police page. *Ojo* and *Hoy* carried no other terrorism articles, and *Expreso* had only two other small items. *La República* gave front-page play to the story of a woman claimed innocent who was killed by police, gave greater detail on Sendero vandalism, and had three long exclusives — on police action against Communist party members, a prisoner released by Sendero, and a reporter arrested under an anti-terrorism statute.

On the opinion pages, *El Comercio*, *Ojo*, *Expreso* and *Hoy* mentioned terrorism only in passing. *La República* ran a lengthy interview with the president, including four pages of detailed discussion and pictures of the insurgency, and the Sunday supplement devoted its cover story to terrorism in the altiplano and contained

news of Senderista plans, opinion on the cause of the violence, and a notice about a media conference on terrorism.

Although their coverage of terrorism varied, the terms newspapers used to cover it were almost identical. To focus on the newspapers' rhetoric, direct quotation of sources were excluded from this list. Newspapers used ***terrorism***, ***subversion***, ***delinquency***, and ***sedition*** interchangeably with *Sendero Luminoso* (and their variants), and the quality of disapprobation was palpable. On the official side, ***anti-subversive***, ***security***, or ***force of order*** were used interchangeably for ***police***, ***army***, and ***military*** (and variants). Yet there were some differences. *El Comercio* used the term ***insurgent*** once and the modifier ***presumed*** twice to modify ***terrorist***. *La República* alone used the terms ***heroic soldiers*** (for government forces), ***accused terrorists***, and ***innocents*** (for non-combatants) These small distinctions in the reporting vocabulary hint at a studied neutrality in *El Comercio*, compared to the occasionally impassioned terms in *La República*.

These patterns of coverage relate to the newspapers' political ideology. Just as Epstein (14) predicted, the political positions of the newspapers were reflected in their treatment of terrorism, and especially of state terrorism. The conservative newspapers were not skeptical of official sources, did not report government violence, and buried disappearances inside the paper, deep within related stories. They also may have used more reserved terminology. The liberal newspaper did just the opposite, questioning official sources, reporting government violence, and presenting the news of the insurgency up front in the paper.

The Extent of Terrorism Content

The extent and openness of terrorism coverage also related to the newspapers' politics. Conservative newspapers limited their coverage, compared to the relative space used by the liberal paper. The amount of editorial space that all five newspapers dedicated to covering Sendero Luminoso exactly corresponded to their positions on the political spectrum. Position on the political spectrum was also a good predictor of the degree to which reporting tended to be frank or implicit. Conservative newspapers were less direct in their coverage, leaving the cause of many problems for the reader to surmise.

Because advertising occupied 51 percent of its 60-page broadsheet issue, the total news-editorial space of *El Comercio* was only slightly larger than that of *La Rèpública*, which ran 88 tabloid pages but had only 15 percent advertising (see Table 2). The tabloids *Ojo* and *Expreso* also had similar news-editorial "holes," almost a third the size of the other newspapers. *Expreso* was the slightly larger of the two, with 66 pages and 25 percent advertising. *Ojo* had 56 pages and 21 percent advertising. *Hoy* had 12 pages in its main, broadsheet section and a 16-page tabloid supplement and carried 11 percent advertising, most of it in the tabloid supplement section.

Among the five newspapers, news articles got the greatest share of non-advertising space in *El Comercio* and the least in *Ojo*. *La República* gave the greatest share to opinion, followed by *Expreso*. *Ojo* and *Hoy* dedicated the preponderance of non-advertising space (and *La República* the minimum) to things other than news.

Terrorism coverage occupied the majority of news space in *La República*. When it dis-

cussed terrorism, it was explicit, where *Expreso* covered many topics related to terrorism without saying so. When the total of terrorism news coverage, both explicit and implied, is considered together, the order of the newspapers matches their positions on the political spectrum. *El Comercio*, on the right, used 20 percent of its news space for terrorism, followed by *Ojo* (31.3 percent), and *Expreso* (44.6 percent). *La República* (57 percent), on the left, had almost three times the coverage of *El Comercio* and twice that of *Ojo*. The ong exception to this pattern was *Hoy* (17.2 percent), which for apparent partisan reasons devoted the smallest share of news space to terrorism.

Table 2. The Use of News-Editorial Space in Selected Peruvian Newspapers[a]

	La República	*Expreso*	*Hoy*	*Ojo*	*El Comercio*
NEWS	(23.7)	(22.9)	(26.6)	(13.7)	(31.2)
Terrorism	57.0	21.5	17.2	12.6	14.8
Implied	0.0	23.1	0.0	18.7	5.2
No relation	43.0	55.3	43.0	68.7	80.0
OPINION[b]	(46.3)	(39.4)	(22.1)	(2.3)	(25.1)
Terrorism	30.8	4.4	7.6	0.0	2.6
OTHER[c]	(29.9)	(37.7)	(51.3)	(84.0)	(43.7)
Total sq. in.	8378	6078	4812	6400	9268

[a]By percentage, excluding advertising space. Figures in parentheses show the share of the total, others show the share within the category. All percentages do not add to 100 because of rounding.

[b]Opinion articles either mentioned terrorism or were unrelated to terrorism.

[c]No other coverage, including sports, features, entertainment, and articles with no particular time value, had any explicit or implied relationship to terrorism.

The use of opinion space also set *La República* apart from the group. Not only did it publish the greatest number of square inches of opinion, over one-third more space than *Expreso*, its nearest rival, but it gave almost a third of that space to topics in which terrorism was discussed directly. The other newspapers by comparison said nothing or next to nothing about their opinions of terrorism.

THE INTENTIONS OF NEWS EXECUTIVES

To discover whether the extent of coverage resulted from explicit guidelines and policies, the publishers of the five papers studied here were interviewed, August 16–18, 1989, about their coverage of terrorism. The publishers of the conservative newspapers — *Hoy*, *Ojo*, *Expreso*, and especially *El Comercio* — enunciated explicit rules of layout meant to limit or downplay the news of terrorism. Layout was a primary tool of control. But the publisher of the liberal *La República* claimed no special treatment for news of terrorism.

The publishers hinted at some efforts by the government to persuade them to play down terrorism. The publisher of *Ojo* said the idea of control had "come up three or four times" (28). But all the publishers declared complete independence from government.

One measure of their independence is their attitude toward the official version of terrorism. All the newspapers except *La República* publish only what official sources provide. The publisher of *Hoy* said, "In the case of terrorism, there is no investigative journalism" (29). But the publisher of *La República* said:

> *La República* confronts the government. I don't believe the press

> should be the conduit of the official version. We don't take the word of the police. We investigate and we discover what happened. . . . *La República* took a picture of [a man] when the police were taking him in. The next day he was found dead. Who will defend human rights? (30)

Although they are not controlled by the government, the media have instituted voluntary restraints. At a meeting in 1983, executives of newspapers, magazines, and television stations agreed to play down their coverage of terrorism. When interviewed, the newspaper publishers said their controls were essentially visual. *Expreso* policy was to put the news "down page" (31). *Ojo* banned terrorism from the front page. *El Comercio* had the most elaborate regulations. They "put it in back in the police section, like any other crime" (32). They also watched their use of adjectives, but they primarily used layout to discipline the stories on terrorism: reducing the size of the headlines, avoiding front-page pictures, and placing the story low on the page or inside. The publisher said *Hoy* adopted a similar policy of "self-control" in 1988.

La República was not present at the 1983 meeting, and in his interview the publisher of *El Comercio* charged *La República* with sensationalism. He said *La República* "used its absence to gain advantage." *La República* circulation increased 159 percent from 1988 to 1989 (33). Several of the publishers entered into recriminations, calling the coverage in *La República* sensational. The publisher of *La República* denied the charge of sensationalism and suggested that *El Comercio* and the other conservative newspapers biased the news toward the government.

The Visual Style of Each Newspaper

To consider these charges and counter charges, the general layout or design pattern first had to be identified for each newspaper. The measurements of most of the details of typography were very similar within each newspaper. The headline customs at the newspapers dictated a narrow range of variation in typography, and the body text was almost completely uniform in size and column width in each newspaper. Even the positioning of stories in the layout of pages, after the most important or top story, varied only a little. Apparently rigid rules of typographic and visual style, most of them imported from the United States, allowed very little variation in how individual articles were presented (34).

El Comercio, the largest newspaper, is a standard broadsheet with full color, extensive classified and display advertising, and the look of a medium-sized U.S. newspaper. As designed by a prominent U.S. newspaper consultant, it follows the general style of layout popular in the United States in the 1970s. Headlines run horizontally across several columns with a single deck. They are generally large and do not vary dramatically in size, and their typography is uniform, without emphatic italics, boldface, or all capitals. The columns of text also have horizontal layouts, in a comfortably large type size. The overall effect is spacious and tranquil, reflecting the style popular in the 1970s among small-city U.S. dailies.

The next largest newspaper, *Ojo*, is a tabloid that uses splashy color, runs the occasional scantily clad women, and fills almost half the typical issue with sports. Its model is the British popular tabloids of the 1950s and 60s. It is decorated with the circles and round-cornered boxes popular in that period, and has the brash headline typography and irregularly shaped text areas typical of what is called circus layout. The effect is lively if a bit crude or unpolished.

La República, the third largest paper, is an oversized tabloid with a red accent color on its type-only cover. Its design is magazine-like,

with longer stories occupying full pages or spreads, similar to the intellectual weeklies that flourished in U.S. cities of the 1970s and 80s, such as the Boston *Phoenix* or the Chicago *Reader*. These adapted the European format of *Le Monde* and *El Pais*, without their classic typography. The style of *La República* invokes the fusion of the intellectual tradition of European newspapers with the American fashions of the seventies.

Expreso, the fourth largest paper, is a tabloid with a blue accent color on its cover. It crowds many short, national and international news stories under bold, condensed headlines, in a style reminiscent of 1940s serious tabloids, such as the Chicago *Sun*. Vertical headline decks and bold, condensed typography predominate, and emphatic forms such as capitals and italics appear frequently. The columns of text are narrow and the body typography small, and text blocks include the doglegs common to what is known as brace or broken layout. These qualities align the newspaper with the hard-hitting and pithy design style known as traditional makeup, which emerged in San Francisco during the first World War.

Hoy changed to a broadsheet briefly in 1989 and used a red accent color on the cover of its single section. As a broadsheet, the newspaper imitated the horizontal layout and typography of *El Comercio*, although with less precision and professional polish.

Visual Analysis of Terrorism News

In order to check the claims of the publishers about their treatment of news about Sendero Luminoso, each newspaper's content was compared with its layout and design. The placement, story size, and use of pictures of the articles on terrorism were compared to those of the articles that were implicitly related or unrelated to terrorism. As might be expected in highly formatted newspapers, the layout and design was fairly constant, regardless of the editorial content. In *Ojo*, *Hoy*, *Expreso*, and especially *La República*, layout position and story size followed the pre-set design style, not the particular terrorism content of the news. The use of pictures appeared to depend on some other factor (perhaps simple availability) also unconnected to terrorism. This finding is consonant with Budd's observation (18) that editors do not use pictures for emphasis.

Although the publishers of *Ojo* and *Expreso* also said they de-emphasized news of terrorism, the tendency was not evident on this particular day. Nor did a careful examination of the layout in *La República* reveal any visual exaggeration of the news of terrorism. The almost magazine-like style of *La República* appears to deal with news in a standardized layout that does not reflect content differences in the nuance of visual form.

El Comercio proved to be the exception. Almost one-quarter of its news coverage (15 of the 65 different news stories on the day studied) had some relation to terrorism. But of the 14 stories appearing on the front pages of news sections, only one related to terrorism. In *El Comercio*, terrorism articles are substantially underplayed when measured for the day under study. This finding was confirmed by the knowledgeable informants. "*El Comercio* has never put a terroristic act on is first page," said Silva (35). "It is evident that *El Comercio* has that standardized."

Conclusion

This study provides a documented case of a newspaper using layout to reflect intentionally its political position on a controversial topic. This result begins to rebut the assumption im-

plicit in the literature that layout is a neutral conduit of content. It also calls into question the pattern of previous research, in which more attention to visual design goes hand in hand with less attention to political ideology. Visual design does appear to be a form of political expression. Layout may not only play a role at times in the rhetoric of news but also serve as a *primary* tool for imposing restrictive policies on political coverage. The newspaper publishers said they explicitly controlled the visual presentation but paid less attention to the other facets of reporting, writing, and editing the news of terrorism.

Under the theory of objectivity, *El Comercio* might be charged with bias for visually downplaying political violence. Likewise, *La República* might be charged with sensationalism for dedicating so large a share of its news hole to the insurgency. The arbiter of these charges would be some measure of an external, objective reality. That measurement is beyond the scope of this study. Critical scholars might consider such the measurement impossible to obtain, but that does not mean that some reasonable approximation should not be the focus of further study.

The alternative is to define the position cultivated by *El Comercio* along with the majority of newspapers circulated in Peru as the dominant view, from which *La República* deviated. But only 11 percent of the adult population of Lima read newspapers (36). In outlying barrios of the city, as many as 7 percent of voters say they support Sendero Luminoso (37). The view of the newspaper publishers does not appear to be dominant, that is, pervasive and persistent across social classes and communities as required in the theory of cultivation analysis.

However, the example of the press in Peru has other implications for the field of visual communication. What was startling in the political violence in Peru of the 1980s was the evident calm of the daily press. The visual appearance of these newspapers stood in dramatic contrast with the social disarray of the other systems in the national infrastructure. *El Comercio*, one of the oldest newspapers in the Americas, was a sea of tranquility. Even the liberal *La República* did not *look* especially shrill in its typographic cover. As this study indicates, the newspapers in Peru are highly formatted, and the treatment each paper gives to the variety of news is fairly constant. The sources for these formats can be traced to specific designers and design movements in the United States. The style of *El Comercio* invoked the peace and stability of small-town North America in the 1970s. The style of *La República* mimicked intellectual U.S. tabloids of the same period. The Peruvian press accepted these designs as efficient and functional, without regard to their historic and political origin. However useful for the U.S. and European markets of their periods, these styles did not reflect the upheaval in Peru.

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22. All figures are from Datum Research Service, "Periódicos y Revistas," Study No. 2, Lima, Peru, September 1988.

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26. In this section, demographic information is from Datum (Note 22), and historic, political, and commercial ties are from informant interviews, especially Silva (Note 34).

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29. Luis Alberto Guerrero U., publisher of *Hoy*, interview with the author, August 16, 1989.

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